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THE DEVELOPMENT OF METHODS IN TEACHING MODERN ELEMENTARY GEOGRAPHY

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II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF METHODS IN THE TEACHING OF GEOGRAPHY IN THE UNITED STATES

This discussion will be carried on under the same general heads as those used in connection with European geography. It is to be noted that the progress in the development of method in the United States is slightly behind, in point of time, that in Switzerland and Germany except in industrial and economic geography. In these latter phases of the study the United States has gone on as rapidly as any of the European countries. This of course is due to the intense commercial development of the last few years which has been increasing in intensity throughout the United States.

1. *Place and Book Geography*

Mrs. Earle says :

Geography was an *accomplishment* rather than a necessary study and was spoken of as a diversion for a winter's evening. Many objections were made that it took the scholar's attention away from ciphering. It was not taught in the elementary schools till this century. Morse's *Geography* was not written till after the Revolution. It had a mean little map of the United States, only a few inches square. On it all the land west of the Mississippi River was called Louisiana and nearly all north of the Ohio River, the Northwest Territory.¹⁷

We now regard these early geographies as rare curiosities both in matter and form. They were usually 12mo and sometimes as small as 32mo. The information they purport to give is also very often very remarkable. The early ones, up to 1820, were usually bound in full leather; in a few cases wood was used. At first there were only a few maps and illustrations. The divisions of the earth were made by the use of the globe.¹⁸ All these early geographies were fine examples of the place and

book geography. Among the more important ones may be mentioned Morse's *American* first published in 1789, but later in 1793 the work was enlarged to 1,250 pages and published in two volumes under the title, *American Universal Geography*. The third edition was published in 1796 and contained about 1,500 pages. The fourth edition appeared in 1801 and 1802 and was thoroughly revised and contained a good many maps. The fifth edition was published in 1805. In this edition Vol. I has only three maps, the world, North America, and South America. Vol. II has three maps also, Europe, Asia, and Africa. But the preface of this edition says that this defect is to be remedied as it is to be accompanied by a good general atlas drawn by Arrow-smith and Lewis.¹⁹

The earliest rival of Morse's books was a small volume published by Nathaniel Dwight in 1795 at Hartford. This was a book of questions and answers, from which many interesting bits of information may be obtained; for example:

Q. What curiosities are there in Portugal?

A. There are lakes into which a stone being cast causes a rumbling noise like the noise of an earthquake.

Q. What are the customs and diversions of the Irish?

A. There are a few customs existing in Ireland peculiar to this country. These are their funeral howlings and presenting their corpses in the streets to excite the charity of strangers, their convivial meetings on Sunday and dancing to bagpipes which are usually attended with quarreling.

Q. What curiosities are there in France?

A. A fountain near Grenoble emits a flame which will burn paper, straw, etc., but will not burn gunpowder. Within about eight leagues of the same place is an inaccessible mountain in the form of a pyramid reversed.

Q. What are the characteristics of the Hottentots?

A. They are the most abject of the human race. They besmear their bodies with soot and grease, live upon carrion, old leather shoes, and everything of the most loathsome kind; dress themselves in sheepskins untanned, turning the wool to their flesh in the winter and the other side in the summer. Their dress serves them for their bed at night, for a covering by day, and for a winding-sheet when they die.¹⁸

The Montor's *Instructor* published in 1804 was another interesting geography. It presents much of the material in verse form. This is a good example:

One river of enormous size,
To west of Mississippi lies,
The river this called Missouri,
And toward southwest its course lies.
This river, from what I can see,
Can't less than the Ohio be.¹⁸

The prose part is also fully as interesting, for much of it is written in the form of paradoxes of which the following is a good example:

Three men went on a journey in which, though their heads traveled twelve yards farther than their feet, all returned alive with their heads on."

Among the other early American geographies may be mentioned the Davis *Geography* published in 1813 and the Cummings, in 1814. The Adams *Geography* published in 1818 was divided into three parts: (1) "Geography of Orthography"; (2) "Grammar of Geography"; (3) "Description of the Earth." The first four excerpts below are from Part II, the others from Part III.

"A mountain is a vast protuberance of the earth." "Europe is distinguished for its learning, politeness, government, and laws; for the industry of its inhabitants and the temperature of its climate." "The White Mountains are the highest, not only in New Hampshire, but in the United States." "Switzerland is a small romantic country lying upon the Alps and is the highest spot in Europe. St. Gothard is the highest mountain." "Several mineral springs break forth in different parts of the United States. The most celebrated are those of Saratoga and Balls Town in the State of New York. The latter place is much frequented by gay and fashionable people as well as by invalids." "Beer is the common drink of the inhabitants of New York State. The forests abound with bears, wolves, deer and elks." "Many of the towns and plantations in Maine are destitute of any settled minister. Missionaries sent among them have been very affectionately received."¹⁸

Peter Parley's *Method of Telling about Geography* was published in 1829 at first, and several editions were issued at different times. He also published his *Natural Geography* in 1845. This is thought to be the first American geography to take the flat quarto shape. One rhyme is of peculiar interest and may be found both in his *Method of Telling about Geography* and in *Natural Geography*. The rhyme is as follows:

The world is round and like a ball
Seems swinging in the air;
A sky extends around it all
And stars are shining there.

Water and land upon the face
Of this round world we see;
The land is man's safe dwelling place
But ships sail on the sea.

Two mighty continents there are
And many islands too
And mountains hills and valleys there
With level plains we view.

The ocean, like the broad blue sky,
Extends around the sphere;
While seas and lakes and rivers lie
Unfolded bright and clear.

Around the earth, on every side
Where hills and plains are spread.
The various tribes of men abide,
White, black, and copper-red.

And animals and plants there be
Of various name and form,
And in the bosom of the sea
All sorts of fishes swarm.

Geography goes high and low
To set them forth and show them;
The more attention you bestow
The better will you know them.²⁰

The Woodbridge and Willard *Universal Geography* was published in 1824. This is only for advanced students and the most peculiar thing about the volume is the last part by Willard which connects geography and ancient history.²¹

These are all good examples of place and book geographies, and in general they are designed for the higher schools rather than the elementary school. One of the first attempts to put geography in elementary form was made by Morse when he wrote his *Geography Made Easy* in 1800. This was an abridg-

ment of the *American Universal Geography* and ran through many editions. In fact, it seems that it may be fairly claimed that this was the most popular elementary geography of the first half of the nineteenth century. It is a small, leather-bound, 12mo of about four hundred pages. From this little volume many interesting quotations might be made, but a few will have to suffice here. We read as follows:

The Wakon Bird, which probably is of the same species as the Bird of Paradise, received its name from the ideas the Indians have of its superior excellence; the Wakon Bird being in their language, the Bird of the Great Spirit. Its tail is composed of four or five feathers which are three times as long as its body, and which are beautifully shaded with green and purple. It carries this fine length of plumage in the same manner as the peacock does his, but it is not known whether, like him, it ever raises it to an erect position. . . .

Among reptiles the American crocodile is described as follows:

The alligator or American crocodile is a terrible creature of prodigious strength, activity, and swiftness in the water. They are from six to twenty-four feet in length; their bodies as large as that of a horse, covered with horny plates or scales, said to be impenetrable to a rifle-ball except about the head and four legs. They make a frightful appearance and at certain seasons a most hideous roar, resembling distant thunder. They are oviparous and lay from one to two hundred eggs in a nest. Their principal food is fish, but they devour dogs and hogs. The old feed on the young alligators till they get so large that they cannot make a prey of them. . . .

The Coach-Whip, Glass and Joint Snakes are great curiosities, the latter, when struck, breaks like a pipe-stem without producing a tincture of blood. . . .

Columbia College, in the City of New York, is in a flourishing state and has more than one hundred scholars besides medical students. The officers of instruction and immediate government are a President, a Professor of Logic and Geography, a Professor of Languages and a Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. A complete medical school is annexed to the college and able professors appointed in every branch of that important science, who regularly teach their respective branches with reputation.

In writing about Louisiana, St. Louis is described as a village of two hundred houses, beautifully situated on the Mississippi, fourteen miles below the Missouri, in latitude $38^{\circ} 18'$ north. Considerable

settlements are made on the banks of the latter river for several hundred miles. This town and its districts contain 5,667 inhabitants.²²

W. C. Woodbridge, 1794-1845, was mentioned above, but some further detail should be given his work. The *System of Modern Geography* was first published in 1833. Later he revised this in 1853 in collaboration with Mrs. Willard. In the introduction of the first edition he tells about the very bad conditions of geography-teaching in the United States and particularly of the poor textbooks. He had just returned from a visit to Europe where he had visited Pestalozzi in Switzerland and also studied a number of the Pestalozzian schools of Switzerland. During this visit he also spent considerable time with Ritter and Humboldt talking about the problems of geography and finally he had been a teacher in Fellenburg's School at Hofwyl. His thought was to make geography into a science and to this end he published the books mentioned. However, he was not equal to the task as can be readily seen from examination of his textbooks, though it must be confessed that his books represent considerable progress when compared with those of Morse. It is of interest to note some of his directions in the matter of method which may be found under the heading "Remarks to Inexperienced Teachers" in both editions of his textbooks. They are as follows:

1. Let the instructor first ascertain that a student has observed the country around him and is familiar with the points of the compass and the application of common geographical terms.
2. Let the student next draw simple maps beginning with a plan of his table or the room in which he is, proceeding to delineate successively a plan of the house, garden, neighborhood, and town until he has represented with tolerable correctness the relative situations and outlines of the principal objects within his view.
3. When he is prepared to understand the lines and points of a map, require him to become familiar with the definitions of geography and the outlines of continents and oceans as presented by the descriptions and questions of this work (pp. 10 to 19) in connection with the atlas and by the questions which follow the table of contents on the map of the world and the grand divisions. The questions should of course be varied and multiplied by the instructor until each lesson is understood and remembered.
4. At first the questions may be answered with the aid and guidance of the instructor, but the student should endeavor as soon as possible to fix the image of the map in his mind and answer from his recollection of it.

5. Nothing will assist so much in this as drawing maps by the eye. Let him draw on the slate the outline of one country at a time; then insert the rivers and mountains and then the cities; first using the map and finally drawing from memory.

6. As soon as the exercise is familiar let a whole class recite in this manner according to such directions as the following:

Draw the outlines of England.

Write the names of the seas, etc., around it.

Draw the mountains. The rivers. Thames, etc.

Let the instructor inspect the slates. He will thus keep all employed and ascertain the knowledge of each pupil without mistake. This plan has been practiced with great success in many schools. The author has published a set of outlines and skeleton maps under the title of *Geographical Copy Books*. In these the pupil begins by inserting only the cities on the outline map; he then copies the outlines on the skeleton map; and is thus easily led on until he can draw the maps from memory alone.²³

Among other topics discussed in this same connection with directions are these: "Structure," "Physical Geography," "Civil Geography," "Analysis of the Continents," "Topography," etc.

In general it seems fair to say that the place and book geography was the type which prevailed throughout the United States till after the Civil War, and it is quite probable that it is still much used in some of the remote parts of the country.

2. Physiographical Geography and Its Human Relations

We have classified Woodbridge as belonging to the place and book period; however it seems fair to say that he does not represent merely that phase of geography. His textbooks are the best evidences of his broader view, especially in those parts in which he gives the directions quoted above. He was fully aware of the inadequacy of the Morse *Geography* and consciously strove to make his works more valuable, but he was unable to find new principles on which to base his discussions.

Another forerunner of the new geography was Horace Mann, 1796-1859. Mann went to Europe in 1843 to study school systems. His *Seventh Annual Report* gives an account of his travels and his impressions of the schools he visited. During this visit he went to Berlin to see Ritter who was then in the zenith of his teaching-power and influence in Germany.

In describing the geography-teaching Mann says in his report that discrimination must be used, for in some respects he thought the work was imperfect, while in others the teaching was pre-eminently well done. The following quotation indicates in part his attitude.

The practice seemed to be uniform of beginning with objects perfectly familiar to the child—the schoolhouse with the grounds around it, the home with its yards, or gardens, and the streets leading from the one to the other. First of all, the children were initiated into the ideas of space, without which we can know no more of geography than we can of history without the ideas of time. Mr. Karl Ritter, of Berlin—probably the greatest geographer now living, expressed a decided opinion to me, that this was the true mode of beginning.²⁴

The above quotation is important because it tells directly about the practice in geography-teaching in Germany, and it is especially valuable for it serves to connect Mann definitely with the geography of Ritter. It seems quite certain that Mann accepted the theories of Ritter but there is no possible way to estimate the influence of Mann on geography-teaching in the United States.

One other thing reported by Mann is worth some attention, namely, the use of maps in the study of geography.

A large map was suspended on the wall, or sometimes the blackboard was used; if the map was used, the teacher told about the country, tracing the important places on the map, or if the blackboard was used, the teacher drew the map showing the important cities, rivers, mountains, etc. In either case the pupils were required on the following day to reproduce the lesson. Mr. Mann thought this was excellent, in fact, the best geography-teaching he had ever seen. He makes a specific comment that such teaching is vastly superior to the study of a few names of places from some lifeless atlas.

The only adverse criticism is that the Germans study only national geography, but give little attention to universal geography.

We have noted briefly the work of Woodbridge and Mann. In spite of the suggestion of these two writers, physiographical geography in the United States really gets its first great impetus

from Arnold Guyot, 1807-1884, who came to this country in 1848 and settled in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was thoroughly familiar with the schools of Germany and Switzerland, having taught in them, and was one of Ritter's best students. He had spent four years as a student in the University of Berlin. From 1848 to 1854 he was in the employ of the Massachusetts Board of Education as an inspector and institute lecturer. In 1854 he went to Princeton as professor of geology and physical geography.

His coming marks the beginning of a definite movement away from the old place and book geography to that of the physiographical geography. He was to the United States what Ritter had been to Europe. His theories were those of Ritter, only slightly re-constructed to suit the conditions in the United States. An examination of his first publication, *The Earth and Man* (1849), shows how thoroughly he had adopted the theories of Ritter. His first chapter in this book may be summarized as follows:

1. The forms, the arrangement, and the distribution of the terrestrial masses on the surface of the globe, accidental in appearance, yet reveal a plan which we are enabled to understand by the evolution of history.
2. The continents are made for human societies as the body was made for the soul.
3. Each of the northern or historical continents is peculiarly adapted by its nature to perform a special part corresponding to the wants of humanity in one of the great phases of its history. Thus nature and history, the earth and man stand in the closest relations to each other and form only one grand harmony.²⁵

These are all statements of Ritter's *Geography* and one could almost forget that he is reading Guyot and believe these are some statements from Ritter's *Comparative Geography*, so closely does the language follow the statement of Ritter's fundamental principles. This whole book is hardly more than an elaboration of the important teachings of Ritter. In 1868 Guyot published his *Geographical Teaching*. This is a book of methods to put into practice the theories outlined in the *Earth and Man*. Some type lessons are given which are fundamental in their form and content. For example there is a series of "Lessons about Home."

The first of this series is an illustrative lesson on "Physical Forms"; this is a lesson on a neighborhood in western New York. It is in the form of a regular recitation. The pupils are the children of the farmers of the vicinity and the time is summer. A brief section of the lesson is quoted as follows:

TEACHER. I would like all of you to think carefully a moment, and try to remember everything you saw on your way to school. (The pupils are then called upon to tell what they saw).

JOHN. I saw some men mowing in Mr. B's meadow.

CHARLES. I saw a red squirrel running along the fence by the woods.

MARY. I saw some cows and a colt, and two calves and some sheep and lambs, in Mr. G's pasture.

FANNY. I saw some cherries that are turning red in the orchard across the road.

TEACHER. You have remembered several things, and I have no doubt if you should think a little longer you could name many more; but we have as many as we can talk about in one morning. We are going to have a lesson on some of the things you have seen in coming to school. Mary spoke of something she saw in a *pasture*. How many passed pastures in coming to school? (Hands are raised.) Mary, can you tell me what a pasture is?

MARY. It is a field where the cattle, horses, and sheep stay.

TEACHER. Why are they in the pasture?

MARY. We drive them there to eat grass.

TEACHER. Do they need anything but food during the day?

CHILDREN. They want drink, too.

TEACHER. Very well. Where do they find drink?

JAMES. There is a creek in our pasture.

SARAH. There is a spring in ours; etc.²⁶

At this point the teacher directs the attention of the class to water forms, and they discuss in some detail, the spring, the creek, the brook, a mill-pond, a river, and a lake. After this the teacher takes up land forms, taking the pasture as the point of departure. They talk about rough land, hills, level land, plains, mountains, and a swamp. At the close a brief summary is made by the pupils, telling the topics brought out in the lesson. The plan suggests that each one of these topics mentioned shall be made the subject for other lessons later on. More than that, the woods, animals, and the relations of the kind of land to the industries of the people are to be made subjects for study.

There can be no question but that this type of lesson represents the best method of study as we have found it in Europe, and furthermore it comes to be the prevailing plan for a larger part of the United States, during the last part of the nineteenth century. Indeed, we do not know anything better yet. It takes up problems within the range of the experience of the child and makes them the starting-point for all geographical knowledge.

It puts the larger emphasis on thinking rather than remembering, in fact, it presents all the best values of the developing method.

A second lesson treats of the "Industries of the Locality." The theory here is that the industries should be studied after the physical geography has been presented. The same conversational plan is used and the homes of the people are first brought up for consideration. This is followed by a discussion of the house, furniture, food, clothing, and the occupations of various men of the community. A good many are farmers, but there is one man who has a sawmill, another a gristmill, one is a blacksmith, one a cabinet-maker, and one keeps a store, etc. The most interesting thing about the lesson is the fact that it is conducted in such a way as to show the interdependence of all these various workers, and at the same time the material of the lesson is kept within the experience of the children. No better plan for the study of the industrial phases of geography has been discovered. Indeed, this is practically the scheme of the teachers who would make the industry the important thing in geography-study. They would start with the industry first, however, and then go to the other problems which are related to the industry in some way.

After a thorough study of the type forms mentioned then Guyot would have the children go on with a study of direction and distance, the globe, continents, and the world.

Guyot published also a series of textbooks which practically failed because there were no teachers to use them, and partly because he as a university professor was not quite familiar enough with elementary-school conditions to bring his material down to the level of the children.

Next to the influence of Guyot, probably should be mentioned

that of Colonel Francis W. Parker, 1837-1902. Perhaps it would be better to say that they were interested in different aspects of geography than to compare them at all. Guyot, was a university professor, profoundly interested in the scientific aspects of geography, while Colonel Parker was the city superintendent and president of a normal school, trying to find suitable material and methods for putting his theories into practice. However, Colonel Parker was no less a follower of Ritter than was Guyot. He had spent three years in Berlin, 1872-75, where the influence of Ritter was still all-powerful under the teaching of his distinguished pupil, Kiepert, who had succeeded him as professor of geography in the university. There seems to be no doubt whatever that Colonel Parker fully accepted the theories of Ritter and Kiepert. More than that, he frequently refers to Guyot and quotes from his works. Some of the students of Colonel Parker who were graduated from the old Cook County Normal, and have distinguished themselves both as students and teachers of geography, report that the first books they had to master when they came to study geography with Colonel Parker were Ritter's *Comparative Geography* and *Geographical Studies*. Another bit of good evidence as to how thoroughly he adopted the principles of Ritter may be found by reading the introduction to *How to Study Geography*.²⁷ Here we have again the statement of the doctrine that the "earth is the home of man," and all the remainder of the book is taken up in an effort to bring this great truth into realization for the children of the elementary school. This is done by taking up some of the typical problems of geography grade by grade.

Farnham, in his book telling of the Oswego methods in geography, quotes both Ritter and Humboldt and is undoubtedly influenced by Guyot's writing. Professedly, the Oswego movement is under Pestalozzian ideals and in general no doubt this is true. But in the matter of geography the ideals of Ritter are much more predominant than those of Pestalozzi. The reasons assigned for teaching geography give full confirmation of this statement. For example, they are said to be:

(1) To explain the development of man by imparting knowledge of continental structure and climate and their influence upon man mediate and immediate. (3) To explain and illumine history. History is a record of the deeds of the human race. The civilization and progress of a people depend very largely upon the structure and climate of their country. (7) To develop man's reverence for human progress. Study the geography of Holland and the development of agriculture and commerce.²⁸

These principles are all clearly related to those we have been discussing of Ritter and Guyot. More than that, it may be fairly said that the whole book treats of the earth as the "home of man," and starts the children into the study of geography with the school, its surrounding, the town, the state, the continent, etc.

The Frye Geography is one of the influential factors of this movement. Alexander Frye was one of Colonel Parker's pupils; in fact, he graduated from the Cook County Normal. His training and no doubt much of his inspiration in the matter of geography came from Colonel Parker. His *Elementary Geography* in particular may be said to follow the subject-matter and method which could be called Ritter and Parker geography.²⁹

The McMurray *Special Methods in Geography* also follows in the same general trend, the only difference being a slight leaning toward industrial and economic geography. For example, such topics as these are there emphasized:

(1) Food products and occupations connected with them; (2) building material and trades related; (3) clothing materials used in manufacture; (4) local commerce, roads, bridges, and railroads.³⁰

The second chapter takes up synthetic geography, going from the home outward with twenty important topics or types. Chapter iii makes a detailed study of these twenty types. Of course we know that McMurray was a graduate of Jena, and that, in part, may account for his method, for it is very much the German plan with the exception, possibly, of the industrial element.

One has only to glance over the elementary geographies of the Rand McNally series, the Dodge series, the Frye series, Natural series, etc., to see how thoroughly they have all appropriated the principles and methods of Ritter, Guyot, and Parker.

It may be observed, too, that these are the books which in the main represent current practice.

One general observation should be made in discussing American geography as related to European; that is, that the movement in the United States differs from that in Europe in that the historical element does not receive so much emphasis in the United States as it does abroad. The historical element is recognized by both Guyot and Parker but present-day practice virtually recognizes a separate course in history and geography for the elementary school. It seems possible to account for this difference in the fact that while we have all the typical geographical forms they cannot be connected with the great historical movements of the race as they are in Europe. Home geography with us does not include the regions which were the scenes of so many of the world's great historical problems as does home geography in Europe. We connect up only fairly well, too, the historical problems of our national development with the geography involved in them.

3. *Industrial and Economic Geography*

In the foregoing discussion we have called attention to the fact that Guyot, Parker, and McMurray have brought in some of the industrial phases of geography, and several other names might be mentioned in the same connection, but on the whole it is about fair to say that this type of geography is in the theoretical stage, except for a few city systems, normal training schools, and university laboratory schools. The establishment of schools of commerce and chairs of geography in a few American universities has brought out the necessity of doing something to come to a better understanding of our industrial and economic problems. This movement is beginning to reach down into the secondary and elementary schools. And, further, the tremendous commercial tension in the business world is demanding more trained workers to carry on its work. For this reason society is turning to the school and asking it to help solve the problems of industry and commerce.

One of the advanced statements of the idea involved in indus-

trial and economic geography has been made by Dewey, where he says:

I should say that geography has to do with all those aspects of social life which are concerned with the interaction of the life of man and nature; or, that it has to do with the world considered as the scene of social interaction. . . . [And again he says] The four stages of geography referred to above, namely, mathematical, physical, political, and commercial, represent then four increasing stages of abstraction in discussing the mutual relation of human life and nature. The beginning must be the commercial geography. I mean by this, that the essence of any geographical fact is the consciousness of two persons, or two groups of persons who are at once separated and connected by the physical environment and that the interest is in seeing how these people are at once kept apart and brought together in their actions by the instrumentality of this physical environment. The ultimate significance of lake, river, mountain, and plain is not physical but social. It is the part which it plays in modifying and functioning human relationship. This evidently involves an extension of the term commercial.³¹

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